



## THE ORDER OF ST JOHN IN SWEDEN

# “Pro Fide, Pro Utilitate Hominum.”

The motto of the Order of St John in Sweden is  
*“For the faith, for the good of mankind”.*

The main task is to support and help fellow human beings in need in the Christian spirit. A number of grants are awarded each year to those in need – directly to individuals, to organisations and to research in the field of health care. Johanniterhjälpen handles the operational activities of the Order of St John. Among other things, volunteers are trained and equipped with heart starters to save lives in everyday life and at various public events.

## OUR ORGANISATION

The Order of St John in Sweden is organized into four regions with a total of about 400 members. As a member, you work with the grant activities and other volunteering. The Order is led by a board of 12 members and a chairman Commendator.



## A HISTORICAL SUMMARY

# FOUNDED IN 1080



The Order of St. John was founded in Jerusalem in 1080 to provide medical care and shelter for pilgrims. The purpose of the Order was then, as today, humanitarian. After Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre had been lost, Pope Urban II in 1097 called on Europe's spiritual and chivalrous elite to liberate the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. After Jerusalem was recaptured and the Kingdom of Jerusalem was established in 1099, the Order was also given military duties, such as protection for hospitals, escorts of pilgrims and armed struggle in the crusaders' ranks. In 1113, the legal status of the Order of St. John was established by decree of Pope Pascal II.

## JOHANNITER IN SWEDEN DURING THE MIDDLE AGES

At the end of the 12th century, the Order came to Sweden and built a monastery near the grave of the English missionary Eskil in what is now Eskilstuna. The monastery soon became a centre for the care of the sick and old. Intercession was held especially for those who supported the monastery's activities with money gifts and donations of farms and homes. Several of the Medieval princes and nobility, including King Magnus Ladulås, gave rich donations. In the 14th century, a small monastery was also founded in Stockholm.

The Order also got an area within the city, where they could store and reload the goods that were brought by ships from Eskilstuna to Stockholm. Towards the end of the Middle Ages, the Johanniiter brothers also ran a shelter – in Kronobäck north of Kalmar. In Stockholm, a St John Church was inaugurated in Stockholm at the beginning of the 16th century by Bishop Otto Svinhufvud. During the Reformation in the 1520s, monasteries and churches were confiscated, which led to the destruction of the Order of St John in Sweden.

## ADVERSITY AND REVENGE

The Reformation led to the end of the Order in England and other Protestant countries as well. However, Germany was an exception. In 1350, an order "Balley Brandenburg des Johanniterordens", was formed which gained a special position amongst the Order and formed the core of an evangelical branch that, despite religious differences and political entanglements, grew in importance in the following centuries.

In this way came about the division of the Order of St John in a Catholic and a Protestant branch that still applies. The evangelical branch, which retained the original name of the Order of St John, was strengthened in 1831 by the restoration of the Order of St John in England. During the 20th century, several countries in Europe created an order belonging to Balley Brandenburg. During World War II, knights of the German Order of St John in Britain were opposed to Nazi regime and therefore gained special status when the Federal Republic of Germany was formed. Today it is one of the largest aid organizations in Germany operating ambulance services and nursing homes.

The Order of St John in Britain was founded in 1831. Queen Victoria enshrined the Order in 1888. In the early 20th century, many order branches were created throughout the Commonwealth.

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## TODAY'S JOHANNITERORDEN IN SWEDEN

In 1919 there were proposals to form a Swedish branch of the Order of St John. The idea was supported by King Gustaf V and Queen Victoria. In April 1920 the order of St John was formed as a Swedish Knight's Association with Count Walther von Hallwyl as a Commendator. The Knight's Union became affiliated with the order of St John in Germany. After the end of World War II, the Swedish Order was separated from the German and in 1946, when King Gustav V approved the statutes, the Order of St John in Sweden became completely independent. King Gustav XVI is now the High Protector of the Swedish Johanniterorden. Similarly, the Order of St John is protected in Britain and the Netherlands by the monarchs of these

countries.



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